

A FRAGMENT.

THAT is to say, I *might* have been a fragment by now, if—but I anticipate. Dining with my friend BANKS, an enthusiastic motorist, we spoke much of the Paris-Madrid race.

"I'm going to have a run over part of the track," said he; "come with me for a few miles? I'll pick you up near Bayonne, and take you as far as the Spanish frontier, say, at Irun, and you can alight there"—(curiously enough, I *did*, but not quite in the way I wanted to). "We shall have some rare fun together."

We had.

At the time appointed I journeyed out to Bayonne and awaited the passing of BANKS. A wire announced the hour of his arrival, and punctually to time a dust-covered infernal machine, accompanied by a stench of petrol strong enough to lean up against, tore down the hill to where I waited, holding my bag. I held out my hand.

"How are you, my dear fel—?"

"Jump in!" yelled the creature in mask, goggles and hairy coat, excitedly, "not a moment to spare!"

"But my bag? I—"

"Throw it away! I'm being timed over the course!"

I climbed in as though the devil had kicked me, and with a "Hooff, hooff! whirr, whizz, bang!" the machine started off as if all the Furies were in hot pursuit.

I never saw that bag again.

We tore up the hill in blinding dust, almost jolted off our seats by the violent jumpings of the motor, just missed the steam tram, flew up the next road, cannoned off the corner of the *Mairie*, whizz, brrrrr! round the turn at such a pace that the wheels skidded, knocking down a cow which had been pensively regarding us from the side of the road. Then down the succeeding hill at forty thousand miles an hour. Whirr—bang!

"What was that?" I shrieked in BANKS's ear.

"Don't know: think we boosted a donkey over those laurel bushes. Ha! that was a shave!" as we just grazed a bullock cart and floored an old woman whose *sabots* could be seen feebly waving in the air about half a mile behind us.

Bang, jolt, crash!!!

"It's all right: we've jumped it. I think it must have been a garden wall. We've apparently got a little bit off the track—dust's so blinding, really can't see whether we're on the road or—" (whop!). "Ah, that's it: we're all right now." And we crossed the ditch and regained the road with a jar which shook me to my innermost being.

As we approached Irun we caught



A LITTLE IMPERIALIST.

Brown has been reading aloud an account of experiments with primary colours in the painting of Guns, with a view to rendering them invisible at a distance. Jimmy has been much interested.

Mrs. B. "BUT, JIMMY DEAR, DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE PRIMARY COLOURS ARE?"

Jimmy (promptly). "RED, WHITE AND BLUE!"

sight of the inhabitants hastily taking refuge in trees: they evidently did not wish to get in the way. A few tufts of black and tan hair, thrown up by our front wheels, suggested that we had overtaken a foxhound without noticing it; but about this matter we could not venture beyond the region of conjecture.

Shooting across the bridge we caught a momentary glimpse of a team of bullocks—the next instant we were through the middle of them, firing one clean over into the stream below. Faster and faster we flew on until, trying to cut a corner rather too finely, we crashed into a milestone, and, as

though fired out of a gun, we clave the blue Empyrean—BANKS on one side of the car and I on the other. I described a semicircle over some tall shrubs and descended on a croquet lawn. BANKS had an opportunity of investigating the gardens opposite.

I returned to England covered with glory and diachylon plaster. I had acquired a store of useful information and a bump as big as a hen's egg on the back of my head. BANKS is not so enthusiastic about motor racing as he was. The sport has lost all its interest for me.

THE TEUTON TO HIS TURKISH SULTANA.

[The sudden revulsion, shown in the postscript of this letter, from an attitude of easy assurance must be attributed to the firmness of Mr. BALFOUR (totally unexpected after the Venezuelan amenities) in declining to allow the British Government to subsidise a Baghdad Railway under German control. The somewhat premature Orientalisation of the Teuton is here indicated by his adoption of the methods of OMAR KHAYYAM through the medium of the English version.]

WAKE! for the Eastern Sun of Promise shines
On your Commercial Baghman's bold designs;
And let us trip together, ME and You,
Along a Railway run on German lines.

Come, fill the Cup! Two Swallows make a Spring;
The Season urges us to take our Fling;
The British Pigeon shows a clear intent
To flutter; yea, the Bird is on the Wing.

A Stoup of Lager 'neath the Prussian Blue,
A Song of Stony Araby, and You
Somewhere beside ME on the frizzling Waste—
The Desert were a Paradise for Two.

Let not the *What-for* hold your heart in thrall,
Nor be concerned about the *Wherewithal*;
But simply lift, my Rose, your almond eyes
To read the Underwriting on the Wall.

There was the Door through which I could not see;
Long had I looked and failed to find the Key;
Then came the British Ass and leaned thereon,
And straight the Road was clear for You and ME.

Anon the Mails of Ind that move too slow
Shall be extracted from the P. & O.,
And those loquacious Vessels cry in vain
"We come by Water; like the Wind we go!"

Whether at Baghdad or at far Koweit
We manage, for the moment, to alight,
Ah! take their Cash and let their Counsel slide,
Nor heed the murmurs of the Muscovite!

They say the Bear is sore about the Head,
And means to paint Someone or Other red;
Whereat my Eagle lightly hoots *Pip-pip*,
And leaves the Lion wrestling in his stead.

So, Love, shall You and I 'gainst him conspire
To grasp the Teuton Scheme of Things entire,
To purchase for a Song the old Combine,
And reconstruct it to our Heart's Desire.

* * *

P.S.—The Moving Finger wrote this much,
When lo! the Vision vanished at a Touch!
Me never thought that BALFI had the nerve
Thus to elude the Potter's closing clutch.

The Potter of Potsdám with little pains
Ere now has thumb'd at will those plastic Brains;
What of the new Design he had in hand?
The Pots have bolted, and the Dám remains!

O. S.

THE M. P. MILITANT.—"I was obliged," observed a constable, recently giving evidence against a violent prisoner, "to obtain the assistance of two M.P.'s before I could secure him." Enquiry on the part of the startled magistrate elicited the explanation that M.P.'s are Military Police. "Oh," said the magistrate, leaning back with an air of

relief, "I thought you meant Members of Parliament." It is a pleasant idea. The spectacle, for example, of Mr. BALFOUR, his philosophic doubt momentarily sunk, attaching himself with a prehensile grasp to the collar of a struggling desperado, while Mr. ARNOLD WHITE, with a cry of "Efficiency!" springs to his assistance, would be both grateful and comforting to the jaded sightseer. There would be no need of a Fourth Party to enliven that situation.

CLIFFORD'S INN AND AFTER.

In the heart of London, a stone's throw from where Temple Bar would be standing if the barbarous stupidity of the last generation had not pulled it down and erected a stone griffin to block the roadway in its place, lies Clifford's Inn. The foundation dates from the fourteenth century. The buildings are of various dates. The oldest of them saw the Great Fire of London and escaped destruction. The Inn has a quaint hall in the Gothic style, and two courts, in the larger of which is a small garden with fine trees, where a wood pigeon built his nest a year or two ago.

The wood pigeon will build no more in the garden of Clifford's Inn. The Inn is to go the way of Temple Bar. The site is advertised for sale next month, and in due time a mountainous pile of offices in the worst style of modern architecture will doubtless occupy its place. Clement's Inn was a quaint and picturesque building once. The ghastly structure which has replaced it represents probably the most favourable destiny that can befall Clifford's Inn. The proceeds of the sale—a hundred thousand pounds is spoken of as a likely figure—are to be employed for the purposes of Legal Education.

It is to be hoped that this purely utilitarian attitude towards historic buildings will spread among the legal profession. For in that case Mr. Punch foresees some rather notable architectural developments in the Inns of Court. Clifford's Inn, the last surviving "Inn of Chancery," is to be destroyed for the sake of money its site will fetch. But other equally promising sources of revenue remain. The Gardens of the Temple, which at present are really of no practical use whatever, would make a superb site for business premises. The custom of eating dinners as an aid to the study of law is ridiculous and antiquated. Why not acknowledge the fact, pull down Middle Temple Hall, and replace it by municipal wash-houses? Fountain Court could then become a stable for omnibuses, and the Temple Church could be converted into a boiler factory. In fact there need be no limit to the scope of modern "improvements." Inns of Court are really quite absurd institutions. Why not raze them to the ground and erect model dwellings for the working classes? It would solve the housing question. Then, if you turn the Charterhouse into a railway station, the Tower into warehouses, and Westminster Hall into an Inebriates' home, something will have been done towards making London a happier and a better place.

Experto Crede.

HAVING read in the *Globe* that "much risk may be avoided (in a hansom) by the ingenious system of holding on firmly by the right hand to something," a correspondent writes to say that he has tested this advice with his silk hat. When he arrived at the accident ward of the nearest hospital with three ribs bashed in and a deep cut over the left cheek-bone, his hand still retained a firm grasp of his headpiece, both being badly dented by contact with the off hind-hoof. His next experiment will be with his watch-chain.



THE TRAP THAT FAILED.

BRITISH LION. "H'M! DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF IT! I'LL GO ROUND THE OTHER WAY."



ARCADES AMBO.

BLEST pair, though a second-rate singer
Should never essay the sublime,
Pray suffer a humble ink-slinger
To "voice" his emotion in rhyme:
For thus I may possibly show you,
O wholly unparalleled twain,
The depth of the debt that I owe you,
CORELLI and CAINE.

When gooseberries grow to gigantic
Dimensions, and Worms of the Wave,
Descried in the distant Atlantic,
Attention insistently crave;
When editors, pallid and ailing,
Forget to be bland and urbane,
You come as a solace unfailing,
CORELLI and CAINE.

Whenever I'm gravelled for copy,
Whenever I'm short of a "par,"
Whenever my verses are sloppy
(And that they repeatedly are),
When foreign imbroglios tire me,
When scandals are scarce in Park
Lane,
You're always at hand to inspire me,
CORELLI and CAINE.

There are some who know nothing of
HUGGINS,
There are some who know little of
CROOKES;
But there cannot exist such a Juggins
As not to have heard of your books.
(Unless on the bench one or two are
So hopelessly dense and inane
As to ask such a question as "Who are
CORELLI and CAINE?")

The poet asserts that Apollo
His bow now and then must unbend,
And latter-day mortals must follow
That excellent rule to the end.
From cutting continual capers
Ev'n Kaisers must sometimes refrain;
But you're never out of the papers,
CORELLI and CAINE.

Then, whether on Cliquot and chickens
Or plasmon and water we fare,
To the champions of SHAKSPEARE and
DICKENS
Let us throw up our caps in the air:
Let us go, like the monarch of Sheba,
In search of the ways that are sane,
And worship at Stratford and Greeba
CORELLI and CAINE.

OUR DUMB PETS.

["More than half the mischief wrought in gardens comes from draughts. If, therefore, you value your plants, do your best to prevent draught."—*Daily Mail*.]

DEAR MR. PUNCH.—On the subject of indoor draughts I flatter myself that I have already accomplished something, as I never enter a club or private house without holding up a wetted finger to determine the force and direction of the



First Tramp (to second ditto). "THAT'S A STYLISH SORT OF DAWG YOU'RE A-WEARIN'!"

wind, and I could, if called upon, furnish meteorological charts of all the important London clubs to bald-headed members and visitors with a pre-disposition to influenza.

Although the subject of outdoor draughts has now for the first time received attention, the fact of their existence has long been known. It is within the memory of liars now living that a pioneer ranchman in the Canadian North-West habitually slept out-doors, until a careless cowboy one night left open the gate of the stockade and the poor man caught his death of cold. And now that the subject may be referred to without provoking ridicule in ignorant quarters, I may say that, owing to similar carelessness on the part of my grocer's boy, I have been kept awake more than once by the sneezing and wheezing in my vegetable garden.

I find that primroses growing in poetic proximity to river brims fre-

quently have wet feet—roots, I mean—and consequently suffer greatly from croup and sore throat.

Early violets and mountain daisies, being exposed to sudden changes of weather, suffer from influenza, and it often happens that unprotected gardens contract a chill in their vegetable marrow.

If the Vegetarian Society is all it claims to be, it will make no delay about looking into this matter. The sufferings of plants and vegetables in old and draughty gardens are terrible to think of, and is it any wonder that the trees moan in melodramas and romantic novels when the North wind is blowing? Personally I have done what I can by publicly advocating that potatoes should never be allowed to appear anywhere without their jackets, and in my vegetable garden I have been careful to shield all bald-headed cauliflowers from draughts. Yours faithfully,

HALF-BLUE (OXFORD) FOR DRAUGHTS.

VI-KINGS ESSENCE; A NORSE TRAGEDY IN A TEA-CUP.

(Condensed, with apologies, from the admirable Ibsen production at the Imperial.)

ACT FIRST.

A rocky coast on the island of Helgeland. Enter SIGURD.

Sigurd. Bluish-white is the rock—though all around it is blackest fog. Ha! I see a ray of faint light. In it will I take my stand. *[He does. Enter ÖRNULF.*

Örnulf. Give place, Viking. In this play mine is the finest part. Therefore need I more light than thou.

Sigurd. Nay, thou must even find a ray of light for thyself, outlaw!

Örnulf (annoyed). Dearly shalt thou aby—if thou wilt pardon so archaic an expression—that word!

[He goes for SIGURD with a sword; they fight. Enter DAGNY, SIGURD'S wife, and ÖRNULF'S six sons, who offer to join in.]

Örnulf. Interfere not—but leave old ÖRNULF of the Fiords to enjoy himself in peace!

Sigurd (surprised). Old ÖRNULF! my father-in-law! Had we more light, this awkward mistake would not have happened!

Dagny (glad, yet uneasy). Truly, father, unprepared were we to find thee and my six brothers turning up here.

Örnulf (leaves off fighting). I was ware of SIGURD from the first, and did but fight for the fun of the thing. Let us have peace. SIGURD, thou owest me a matter of three hundred pieces of silver, as moral and intellectual damages for carrying off DAGNY some five winters since. Loth am I to press thee—but if thou hast the sum about thee—

Sigurd. Settle up will I anon, for thy charge is reasonable enough, and a silken gold-fringed cloak will I throw in.

Örnulf. A deal will we term it. Hither have I come, a sporting old Icelandic chieftain with business instincts, to collect compensation in cash from GUNNAR, who also hath carried off HIÖRDIS, my foster daughter.

Sigurd. GUNNAR! my foster brother! Doth he then hang out here? Truly a small world it is, and this meeting of ours is the work of the long-armed Norn of Coincidence!

Örnulf. Without such Norns could no tragedies occur. Fain would I settle this little matter with GUNNAR peacefully and without bloodshed—but, unless his way he can see to a speedy settlement—

Kåre (a peasant, enters and throws himself at Ö's feet in abject terror). Grant me protection! On my tracks is HIÖRDIS. One of GUNNAR'S house-carls have I slain, because he flouted me for a thrall.

Örnulf. That is the least that any gentleman could do on being flouted for a thrall. Here cometh GUNNAR. Leave this to me. I will arrange it with him. *[GUNNAR comes in.]*

Gunnar. What, SIGURD! my foster-brother! This is indeed an unexpected—And ÖRNULF, too! Well wot I what thou hast come about—that affair of HIÖRDIS.

Örnulf. Open am I to an amicable arrangement, for a good riddance in sooth was she!

Gunnar. No wish have I to haggle, greybeard, but right willingly will I pay the damage, whatever it be.

Örnulf. I will but charge thee my out-of-pocket expenses. Now make thou peace with KÅRE here, or else, most reluctantly, shall I be compelled to—

Gunnar (hastily). Quits do I call it with KÅRE at thy request. *[HIÖRDIS enters with a train of House-carls.]*

Hiördis (coldly). Quite a family party, meseems! GUNNAR, my foster-father and his six sons, DAGNY, my foster-sister, and *(starts as she sees SIGURD)* another old friend of mine. Well, ÖRNULF, art thou going to hand over KÅRE to GUNNAR here?

Gunnar. No need is there. Peace have I made with KÅRE in rede and deed, HIÖRDIS. *[Kåre slinks out.]*

Hiördis (scornfully). And well I wot why—since he hath ÖRNULF to take his part! *[She sneers.]*

Gunnar. Nay, for ÖRNULF and I are already the best of friends. I have agreed to pay him compensation for the loss of thee.

Hiördis. Not so—rather must thou fight him, since he cometh in arms to demand it—or what will our neighbours say of thee?

Örnulf. Never, I see, wilt thou be satisfied till ructions thou hast stirred up between us!

Dagny. Truly, HIÖRDIS, if SIGURD is content to pay up and look pleasant, surely GUNNAR—

Hiördis. SIGURD did not slay the Big White Bear that, in my maidenly passion for privacy, I employed to guard my bower. GUNNAR did.

Gunnar (uncomfortably, with a glance at SIGURD). Nay, not quite so much of that White Bear, HIÖRDIS!

Sigurd. He who slew the Big White Bear when it was chained up no coward can be deemed, HIÖRDIS!

Hiördis. Then must GUNNAR demand atonement from my foster-father for slaying my father JÖKUL—for a fight there is bound to be, somehow or other.

Örnulf. In fair fight I slew thy father—but ye women know naught of business. I will not atone.

Gunnar (undecidedly). Methinks, as HIÖRDIS'S legal representative, I am bound, to some extent, to call thee to account.

Örnulf. By no means. In our law a woman wedded by force, and without any compensation paid to her foster-father, hath no legal representative. Lawfully is she no better than, to quote from another Norwegian saga, a Wild Duck!

[General sensation; HIÖRDIS quivers with rage at the insult.]

Hiördis. Homeward will I go after being thus flouted for a Wild Duck. Now, indeed, must thou fight him, GUNNAR, or else— *[She goes out in a towering passion.]*

Gunnar (aside to SIGURD). A little upset is the wife, but in time will she come round. Thou and I must talk things over by and by. *[He goes out after HIÖRDIS with his men.]*

Örnulf. Dearly shall HIÖRDIS aby—but I forget, that expression have I used already. GUNNAR shall I assuredly have to fight after this.

Sigurd. That can I not suffer. Foster-brothers are we, and pals of old. Compensation will I pay thee for the pair of us.

Örnulf. Handsome is thy offer. Yet no, business is not everything—rather will I fight him and thee into the bargain. *[Kåre returns.]*

Kåre. Listen; right fain am I to score off HIÖRDIS, who is threatening me. So, if thou wilt see me through, this night will I burn down GUNNAR'S hall and everyone within it. Is it a bargain?

Örnulf. Ashamed ought thou to be of thyself for so unsportsmanlike a suggestion. Be off!

Kåre (going off). Of no consequence is it, for another way know I to pay her out.

Örnulf (to SIGURD). Right well will it serve her. JÖKUL her father brought up his children on wolves' hearts, and one can well see that HIÖRDIS surely got her fair share of such provender! *[GUNNAR comes back.]*

Gunnar. Things have I squared with HIÖRDIS, and just now hath a happy thought struck us. Why have family rows at all? Why not, like good chaps, come and dine quietly without ceremony? Well will we do ye, and even put ye up for the evening. What say'st thou, SIGURD?

Sigurd. Engaged am I to dine in England with King ÆTHELSTAN.

Dagny. But not for this evening. Thou wottest well that we are free to-night to dine with the GUNNARS.

Sigurd. Be it so. Well-pleased are we to accept thy kind invitation.

Gunnar. Right friendly is it spoken. ÖRNULF, old warrior, thou wilt join us?

Örnulf. So sorely hath HÍÖRDIS hurt my feelings. I will think it over, and let thee know.

Gunnar. We shall expect thee, then. And now must I hasten home to put out the mead. *[He goes out.]*

Sigurd. DAGNY, let us return to our ship and put on apparel more befitting a quiet family dinner. *[They go out.]*

Thorolf (ÖRNULF's youngest son, enters). Father, is it true that thou hast fallen out with HÍÖRDIS?

Örnulf. H'm—a certain coolness perhaps is there between us. Why?

Thorolf. Because thou mayst be of good cheer. KÅRE is on his way to slay HÍÖRDIS' only son, little EYOLF—I should say, little EGI. Little EYOLF is in another saga.

Örnulf (with sudden resolution). Then I will fight—and I, not KÅRE, will take my revenge on her!

Thorolf. What meanest thou to do?

Örnulf. Nay, were I to tell thee, then would my best scene in the Second Act be ruined. Go thou to this Feast of theirs, and behave as politely as thou canst. *(To his six other sons.)* Follow me, my wolf cubs, and ye shall have blood to drink!

[ÖRNULF rushes out with his six sons, who brandish their spears in boyish delight at the prospect of a real row at last.]

Thorolf (to himself). They have all the fun, and I, as the youngest son, must sit through the stodgy family feeds. *[He goes out.]*

Sigurd (enters with DAGNY, dressed for dinner). Now, wife, that we are alone, I have a secret to reveal to thee.

[He tells her how, one night, after "the horn had gone busily round," HÍÖRDIS had vowed that no warrior should win her unless he slew the Big White Bear that guarded her bower, and carried her off in his arms.]

Dagny. But all this do I already know. And ever have I thought that rough was it on the Bear. For GUNNAR slew him.

Sigurd. Not GUNNAR, but I. Much courage had GUNNAR, and great love for HÍÖRDIS, but a White Bear could he not abide. Wherefore I slew it for him, and, as the bower was but imperfectly lighted, HÍÖRDIS never noticed that I was not GUNNAR, but gave me the ring which thou now wearest on thy arm. Better had it been, perhaps, had I handed it over to GUNNAR in case of awkward questions, but thee was I carrying off the same night, and I forgot. Still, it would be as well not to exhibit it before HÍÖRDIS.

Dagny. My brave and noble warrior! But why tell me all this now?

Sigurd. Truly is it scarcely playing the game with dear old GUNNAR, but were I silent the dickens would it play with the Second Act. And after all, no woman ever yet betrayed a secret, and sure am I that, however trying may be HÍÖRDIS, nought will induce thee to let forth so ill-favoured a cat from the bag, or pretty would be the kettle of fish.

Dagny. Indeed, I should never dream of alluding to the matter, unless I were absolutely driven to it!

Sigurd. Well, I have warned thee, and all reasonable precautions have I taken. Let us away, then, to the family festival; and may it go off as peacefully and happily as we could possibly expect under the circumstances.

[They away to the Feast as the Curtain falls.]
F. A.

MOTTO FOR THE LADY OF THE HOUSE.—Don't worry about trifles; make a blanc-mange.



Doctor (to Mrs. Perkins, whose husband is ill). "HAS HE HAD ANY LUCID INTERVALS?"

Mrs. Perkins (with dignity). "E's 'AD NOTHINK EXCEPT WHAT YOU ORDERED, DOCTOR!"

OUR GIRL-ATHLETES.

(A metrical paraphrase of a recent letter by "A Berkshire Rector" to the "Times.")

SIR,—I'm not an old fogey; my share I have done
With bat, ball and oar, and my sons were playing
Like me, "young barbarians" at school ev'ry one;
But the girls to pursue the same games have begun,
So 'tis time that their father a word were saying.

It is not overstraining the truth if I state
That my daughters are sending me home despatches
That might have been written verbatim of late
By their brothers; containing the news up to date
Of athletic, not mere matrimonial, matches.

There's the same adulation of muscular skill,
Their "teams" undertake the same tours and journeys,
(N.B.—Journey-money appears in the bill),
The same technicalities reeled off at will,
And alas! the same slang to describe their tourneys.

MARY BLANK is a bowler that's "ripping," I'm told,
NELLIE DASH, too, is "ripping," with "forward" added;
The "hat trick" they all know. I had to behold
My third daughter last year standing up to be bowled
By a male "pro"—the girls were all gloved and padded!

The consequence is for our house talk to grow
Quite childish, where once intellectual leading
We gained from our girls—country homes are now "slow"
For those who were wont with their mother to sew,
Content while JANE AUSTEN supplied their reading.

Their exercise due let the maidens enjoy
By all means—to that I am no objector;
But matches are turning each girl to a boy,
And the slang that attends them but serves to annoy
Very greatly
Yours truly,
A BERKSHIRE RECTOR.

DOMESTIC DRAMA.

(A Matter of Taste.)

GOOD-BYE then, MARY, if you really must?
 You're sure you?—Very well then. Anyhow
 I'm rather busy. No. I've got to see
 A dreadful female. Worse! A governess!
 For ALGY, yes. You know he's nearly eight,
 And getting quite beyond—I wish I could!
 I don't know how to manage him one bit.
 My dear, a little demon. That's the truth
 His temper's simply vile, and as for lies
 You can't believe a single word he says.
 His manners too! But what can one expect,
 Considering the way his father—well,
 You know what JACK is.

Oh, this woman? No.

I saw about her in the *Morning Post*:
 She's recommended by a Lady H.,
 Whoever she may be: a fraud, no doubt.
 But anyhow I wrote—was that the bell?
 Yes! Then you'd better go. I never keep
 These sort of people waiting. Here she comes.
 Adieu, *ma chérie*, then. Oh—How d'y'e do?
 Excuse me for a moment—I forgot!
 That cook you spoke of. Is she very dear?
 JACK's rather—only fifty? Oh dear, no:
 That's not a bit too much. I'll write at once.
 Oh! what about the Duchess's to-night?
 Then *au revoir*. I'll come. Perhaps by then
 I'll know who "Lady H." is.

Please sit down.

You'll have some tea? Well then, if you don't mind,
 We'll get to business. That's to say, unless—
 I'm not mistaken, am I? You—you've come—
 It is about the governess's place?
 I thought at first you looked—then, may I ask,—
 Now are you *fond* of little boys? So glad!
 Then you are sure to love my ALGERNON.
 He's such a duck—a little difficult,
 You know, high-spirited and all the rest,
 But such a clever angel. By the way,
 Were you at Girton? Oh! Not anywhere?
 Dear me! Of course that makes a difference.
 My husband's so particular. But still
 It's chiefly *moral* training ALGY wants,
 And that, no doubt—

Yes, yes, we'll come to that:

The—er—the salary, you mean. I'm sure
 We shall not quarrel over that. But first
 I'd better tell you what the duties are.
 They're quite ridiculously light—in fact
 If I could only find the time, I'd love
 To do it all myself. I always think
 A mother's influence so much the best
 For any child—don't you? But, as it is,
 I simply cannot manage ALGERNON,
 I have so much to do.

If you don't mind,

I'd better finish what I have to say.
 Your work would only be to get him up,
 And see him dressed, and take him out for walks,
 And mend his clothes, and read with him—in fact
 Look after him until he's safe in bed.
 And then, no doubt, instead of coming down,
 You'd rather have your supper in your room:
 So much more pleasant—yes, for everyone.
 And, as for salary, my husband meant
 To offer twenty pounds, but, on the whole,

I think that I may make it twenty-five!—
 Then that's all settled. Silence gives consent!
 But, may I ask your name? I'm so ashamed,
 I've quite—I beg your pardon? Lady HOOD?
 Then you are Lady H.? But—oh, your friend!
 I don't quite understand. Dear me, in bed?
 I see. You came instead. Most kind of you!
 And what am I to—will she take the place?
 But *why*, if I may ask. If—not enough?
 But—but I offered twenty-five! My cook?
 Ah, yes! No doubt you—er—you overheard.
 Oh, not at all. My fault! of course you see
 How very different the cases are.
 I know it isn't—yes, I quite agree,
 In fact I've told my husband more than once
 That Education really does come first.
 But then, what can one do? The fact remains,
 Good cooks are scarce, and governesses swarm,
 And so, poor things, one *has* to pay them less,
 One really has no choice! Besides—Good-bye!

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

MR. BATSON has garnered a series of papers appearing from time to time in various magazines, and strung them together under the title, *A Book of the Country and the Garden* (METHUEN). They form a pleasant, chatty, diary of a year running from March to February. For amateur gardeners they convey many useful hints. For those who, like my Baronite, prefer to look on whilst the gardener is at work, they are full of pleasant memories and associations. An added interest is found in the fact that the book is illustrated with a number of pretty sketches by Mr. A. C. GOULD; his father, the inimitable F. C. G., occasionally looking in and showing how the thing should be done.

The steps of *Lovey Mary* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) leading footsore little Tommy, land her in the Cabbage Patch, where we meet again Mrs. Wiggs, Miss Hazy, Asia, Australia, and Europeny. *Lovey Mary*, aged thirteen, is monitress in a Home for Children. Her motherly heart, swelling at the prospect of losing a little waif and stray she had taken to it, runs off with him and goes in search of a situation that will enable her to keep him in comfort. Their progress is hampered by Tommy's insistence on possessing a live duck, in place of one whose companionship he had cultured in the playground of the Home. A dollar was Mary's sole capital, but she spent what was necessary in the purchase of a duck, which Tommy conveniently carried with his arm round its neck. The Cabbage Patch thus invaded rises to its usual height of neighbourly hospitality. In Miss ALICE HEGAN RICE's hands it loses nothing of its residential squalor and its innate freshness of human nature. My Baronite is delighted to meet Mrs. Wiggs again, with her cheery way of looking out on the world. Here is a bit of her philosophy worth writing out in letters of gold and hanging up in other people's households: "The way to git cheerful is to smile when you feel bad, to think about somebody else's headache when yer own is 'most bustin', to keep on believin' the sun is a-shinin' when the clouds is thick enough to cut. Nothin' helps you to like it like thinkin' more 'bout other folks than about yerself."

Cornelius (SMITH, ELDER) is the story of the daily lives of a happy variety of living men and women. It is set alternately in a background of town and country, the latter affording Mrs. DE LA PASTURE opportunity for fresh display of the delicacy of her pencil and brush. The germ of the plot—an obscure country boy, son of a dairy-maid, turning out to be the heir to a peerage—is sufficiently commonplace.

Mrs. DE LA PASTURE increases the effect by the apparent ingenuousness with which she gives herself away. But it is only the art of woman. *Bien fol qui s'y fie.*

Lured on to the apparently inevitable, the trusting, slightly scornful reader is, by dramatic, unexpected stroke, laid on his back breathless with surprise. Whilst the canvas is fairly crowded with figures, each is alert with life, instinct with individuality. *Cornelius* is a fine conception, one of Nature's noblemen. Airy, fairy *Lilias* is surrounded by divers foils—her vulgar aunt, *Mrs. Morrice*, her dreamy uncle *David*, her outwardly phlegmatic sister *Anne*, and, most delightful of all, pragmatical Aunt *Phillipotte*, with whom my Baronite is intimately acquainted in social life, though it is more than probable Mrs. DE LA PASTURE never set eyes on the particular tall figure, with its crowning grace of white hair, he has in mind. *Cornelius* will distinctly advance the author's reputation, which is saying a good deal, since she wrote *Deborah o' Tod's*.

The Baron welcomes with pleasure *The Gourmet's Guide to Europe* (GRANT RICHARDS), written by Lieutenant-Colonel NEWNHAM DAVIS and ALGERNON BASTARD. They have visited and done themselves as well as possible at all the principal Restaurations in the civilised world, and, *mirabile dictu*, they are alive to tell the tale! Here, indeed, are a couple of genuine "Cook's Tourists." The "J. G." or Junior Gourmet, ALGERNON B., acting under the orders of his superior officer, seems to have been compelled to rough it occasionally, as, for instance, in Constantinople, while his sympathetic collaborateur (at a distance) was luxuriating in Paris. On another occasion, too, the "J. G." complains, humbly it is true, of a somewhat trying experience in Greece what time the physiognomy of the rather wily Major Gourmet was radiant with the oil of perfect cookery in Vienna. Yet was it necessary for the general utility of the book that while one of the two should be able of his own experience to tell you what to eat and drink and where to eat and drink it, the other should be able to inform intending travellers, equally from his own experience, what to avoid in the way of food, drink, and localities. To the one who says "Do" and to the other who says "Don't" all readers will be equally obliged; and if there be any excess of gratitude due to either it must be to the amiable "co-author." The Baron recommends all his friends to read, mark, and digest the excellent dinners given by these "co-authors," who, as genial hosts, are always entertaining.

BARON DE B.-W.



First Stable Boy (leading in Winner). "'ADN'T YOU BETTER GO AND GET YER MONEY? THE BOOKIE MIGHT BOLT."

Second Stable Boy. "OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT. HE CAN'T. I PICKED A FAT ONE WITH ONLY ONE LEG!"

MADE IN SWITZERLAND.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Daily Chronicle* of April 22 says that a Zurich firm are doing an enormous business in the sale of "cribs" and "impositions" to the ingenuous youth of all nations.

This will not do. It is one more tincture in the coffin of England's commercial supremacy. It is a most insidious form of alien immigration. We are already depending upon foreign countries for bread, meat, and other commodities of life, and now the Bohn market is taken from us.

The British Infant, at present being brought up on Swiss milk, will proceed to acquire Swiss-English as she is spoke by the enterprising Alpine hotel-keeper. The Fourth Form Boy will cease to improve his hand-writing by

laboriously transcribing the Georgics; his eye and taste will be vitiated by Genevese mis-spelling and cacography. The Freshman, having found out how to address a letter to the Continent, will be led on to patronise German lotteries and generally unsettle himself for life.

Mr. Punch implores SMITH Minor to resist the wiles of the Helvetian tempter. Let him join a league to oust the intruder and to patronise home products only. There are many excellent translations in the field, or rather, the purlieus of Charing Cross. There are numerous deserving professional scribes on this side of the water who will do a hundred lines for the price of a jam tart. The British crib is in danger, and the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.



THE RULING PASSION.

Customs Official. "HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO DECLARE?"

Absent-minded Traveller (Bridge-player, just catching last word). "OH, LEAVE IT TO YOU!"

THE BUDGETS OF OTHER DAYS.

[A writer in a contemporary, after remarking that Budget speeches of late years have been quite prosaic affairs, fondly recalls the days of GLADSTONE and DISRAELI, when financial statements were fired with imagination and delivered with eloquence.]

Oh, let me praise the Budgets which
They fashioned when I was a boy;
In fire and inspiration rich,
Replete with beauty, fraught with
joy:
The mantle of Romance is cast
Over the Budgets of the past!

Ah, in those dear departed days,
The Chancellor—a soulful man—
With honeyed words and well-turned
phrase
Unravelled his financial plan;
And when his fancy spread her wing,
Taxation seemed a blessed thing!

His eloquence, ornate and rare,
Convinced us WORDSWORTH proved his
case
What time hesang, There's naught so fair
As is the smile on Duty's face;
He even made the patriot pray
Our Customs never might decay.

Spent is the old-time fiscal fire,—
Now Chancellors their brains equip
With gifts that City folk admire
In men who deal in stock and
scrip:
Men who the force of figures teach,
Disdaining aid from those of speech!
And yet perhaps 'tis well to choose
The latter mode, though dull and
trite;
Since soaring minds are apt to lose
Their balance in some dizzy flight;
And what's a Chancellor, except
His "balance" be most nicely kept?



THE CHAIN OF FRIENDSHIP.



ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Commons, Tuesday, April 21.

—When in the case of a former Bishop of Winchester question was put,

"And shall TRELAWNEY die?"

answer was made, with honest vigour that excuses slight looseness of construction of the colloquy,

"There's thirty thousand Cornishmen Shall know the reason why."

This afternoon, on reassembling after Easter recess, analogous question was put in respect to the Lord High Commissioner for Scotland, "And shall Lord LEVEN die?" Regret to say answer not quite so satisfactory as in case of Sir JOHN TRELAWNEY (after all, since deceased). Scotch Members on the whole show themselves indifferent to issue. Mr. WEIR even goes so far as to affirm that the Lord High Commissioner "is paid for it." Risk of drains not specifically mentioned in his appointment. But in the opinion of the Member for Ross and Cromarty it is included.

C.-B., with the sagacity that is the birthright of dwellers beyond the Tweed, instantly put his finger on the cause of trouble. Vote before Committee is for £40,600 on account of Royal Palaces. WHISKEY DEWAR moved reduction by £100 in order to complain of the Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland, departing from custom when the General Assembly is to the fore, proposing to remove his head-quarters from Holyrood Palace to, as Mr. DEWAR put it, "the Station Hotel, of all the places in the world." Whisper went round that this contemptuously indignant reference was based upon alleged fact that at this particular hostelry, "of all places in the world," a certain brand of pure Scotch is unattainable.

C.-B., as hinted, put the whole business straight. "There is," he remarked, transfixing PRINCE ARTHUR with stern glance, "something below the surface."

Of course there was. There were the drains.

Just as on the eve of opening of Parliament the roads approaching Westminster Palace are taken up, so, the time being at hand for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to foregather in the capital, the Board of Works swoop down and disturb the drains at Holyrood Palace. Lord LEVEN and MELVILLE is, truly, Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. As such, drains do not daunt him. But he is more. He is a husband and a father, and, with all respect to Mr. WEIR, is not disposed to risk his life and their happiness.



JOHN BULL'S BUDGET EXPRESSION, 1903.

Can the fact that John Bull has been looking like this the last few days be due to the "Fourpence off the Income Tax"? We fancy so!

Case at first sight strong. But CANNY CALDWELL puts his finger on its weak point. The Lord High Commissioner declines to dwell in Holyrood Palace on account of the drains, "preferring," as Mr. SHAW pointedly puts it, "to sleep in an adjoining public-house."

Very good. "But," says the Canny One, "he is going to hold his *Le-vees* in the tainted dwelling." What is bad for one Lord High Commissioner is a hundred-fold worse for reverend gentlemen and others with wives and daughters who will attend what C. C. with increasing emphasis alludes to as "*Le-vees*."

Being on his legs another objection illuminates his shrewd mind. Dispensing hospitality in what PRINCE ARTHUR

loftily alludes to as "the ancient residence of the Kings of Scotland," the Lord High Commissioner is privileged privily to dispense liquor that has not paid toll to the Exchequer. For years reverend gentlemen, lights of manses fructifying remote spots of Scotia, looking in at Holyrood during the General Assembly fortnight, have sampled toddy as innocent of excise duty as if it were the potheen of a neighbouring isle. How will it be in respect of the personal account of the Lord High Commissioner taking his dram at the "of all places in the world" alluded to by Mr. DEWAR? Will he purchase it duty free, or how? CANNY CALDWELL, carefully parting the skirts of his black frock-coat, emblem of

frugal respectability, resumes his seat, feeling he had 'em there.

In vain PRINCE ARTHUR, hearing in his distant room echo of the slogan, hastens in and pleads that there is nothing in Mr. BLACK's mournful plaint that the arrangement is deliberately "designed with the purpose of stifling national sentiment in Scotland." Scotsmen weeping over an affront paid to Holyrood will not be comforted. Division insisted upon. Ministerial majority run down to parlous figure of 39.

Business done.—Sittings resumed after Easter. Government ran narrow risk of defeat.

Thursday night.—The Income Tax payer is the Needy Knife-grinder of the community. Whenever the country is in danger or difficulty Chancellor of Exchequer turns to him, claps on a penny, peradventure threepence. This of course in addition to his contribution, large in proportion as his means are liberal, to indirect taxation.

To-day, the War being really over, Chancellor of the Exchequer has a surplus. The long-suffering Income Tax payer, Issachar among his fellow citizens, meekly lifts his head and asks to be remembered in the day of comparative prosperity, as he is never forgotten in time of trouble. Last year ST. MICHAEL, putting on an extra penny, promised to take it off this year. Income Tax payer, growing bolder, asks ST. MICHAEL's successor to make it twopence. Encouraged by sound of his own voice, goes on with increasing firmness to ask for threepence, as the Needy Knife-grinder asked for sixpence.

RITCHIE's reply comes to-night in thronged House listening to Budget Speech. Compare it with that snapped forth by the Friend of Humanity immortalised by CANNING,

"I give thee sixpence! I will see thee damn'd first."

Note not only the brutality of this response but the coarseness of the language in which it is conveyed. How different are words and mien of the latter-day Friend of Humanity, standing by the brass-bound box a long line of Chancellors of the Exchequer has thumped!

"I give thee threepence! I will make it fourpence."

This it is to be born with a generous heart and to have a surplus of nearly eleven millions.

Business done.—Budget brought in. Fourpence knocked off Income Tax.

Friday night.—GEORGE WYNDHAM, back from Ireland after Easter holidays, sits on Treasury Bench and thinks of coming day when he shall move second reading Land Purchase Bill. Bleak April weather prevalent elsewhere; for

him the sun shines as it rarely falls on an Irish Secretary. Seems only the other day he was howled at all over Ireland as the "smiling assassin." Now landlord and tenant vie with each other in applause. If he will only pinch a few more millions from pocket of impoverished British taxpayer he shall have a statue on College Green. Nay, he shall be canonized. Why should so-called Merrie England have monopoly of St. George? Why not "St. George for Resuscitated Ireland?"

"Pity ANDREW MARVEL is no more," said the MEMBER FOR SARK.

"Why?" I asked, though, really, have ceased to marvel at SARK's inconsequences.

"If he were still alive," he murmured, "he might string another Horatian Ode such as that with



THE HERO OF THE HOUR.

"I propose to take off fourpence."
(Mr. R-itch-e.)

which he welcomed CROMWELL's return from Ireland. Of course nothing comparable between our Chief Secretary's rule and that established by iron hand of the Protector. PRINCE ARTHUR, with his 'Don't hesitate to shoot,' came nearer the Cromwellian standard. But there are some lines in the Ode curiously appropriate to present circumstances:

And now the Irish are ashamed
To see themselves in one year tamed:
So much one man can do
That does both act and know.

Again,

He to the Commons' feet presents
A Kingdom for his first year's rents.

Ireland, you see, really brought within the Union. Perhaps, in the unavoidable absence of ANDREW MARVELL, ALFRED AUSTIN will tip us a stave."

Business done.—Compensation for Disturbance (Licensed Victuallers) Bill read a second time.

WHAT THEY SEEM TO EXPECT (Made in Germany.)

THE German newspapers show such absurd annoyance when commenting on King EDWARD's visit to France, that one can only suppose that, in their opinion, they and their country should control everyone. Happily our country, though the heads of our soldiers are decorated with German caps, and the feats of our Ministers are capped with German decorations, has not yet sunk into complete vassalage. What the Germans apparently expect, and would certainly enjoy, is the perusal of some such items of news as these:—

The King of ENGLAND, having applied for the necessary permission, has been informed that His Majesty the KAISER is graciously pleased to allow him to visit Italy. As regards a similar application for permission to visit France, His Majesty the KAISER has caused instructions to be sent to the King of ENGLAND forbidding him to go.

The English Ministers, who have usually shown a praiseworthy respect and obedience towards the German Government, have submitted to Count von BÜLOW a proposal to construct a new breakwater to protect the coast of Suffolk from the inroads of the sea. The Imperial Chancellor, considering the breakwater a disrespectful menace to the fortifications of Heligoland, has given orders to the English Ministers to abandon the scheme.

Recently, in the English Parliament, a member called GIBSON BOLWES made an outrageous attack upon his Majesty the KAISER. We almost hesitate to repeat the gross insult. The misguided man actually ventured to apply the word "impetuous" to his Imperial Majesty. The wretched BOLWES was at once arrested, and, after being chained hand and foot, was thrown into a subterranean dungeon of the Tower of London. He was tried yesterday and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment in the dungeon. His Majesty the KAISER has been graciously pleased to confer the Red Eagle upon the Lord High Chancellor as a mark of his approval.

An English Colonel has been found guilty of grave disrespect to the Fatherland. A German band was playing the *Wacht am Rhein* outside his house, and the wretched Colonel, instead of standing on his doorstep in full uniform and saluting, actually asked them to go away. The Court Martial, disregarding his absurd defence that his wife was ill, sentenced him to be degraded to the ranks and dismissed with ignominy. His Majesty the KAISER has been graciously pleased to bestow the Order *Pour le Mérite* on Mr. BRODDRICK.



ENTER SPRING.



BULL AND BEAR STOCK EXCHANGE
RACE.

DUDLEY JONES, BORE-HUNTER.

I.

As is now well known, my friend Mr. DUDLEY JONES perished under painful circumstances on the top of Mount Vesuvius. His passion for research induced him to lean over the edge of the crater in such a way as to upset his equipage. When we retrieved him he was a good deal charred, and, to be brief, of very little use to anybody. One of our noblest poets speaks of a cat which was useless except to roast. In the case of DUDLEY JONES, even that poor exception would not have held good. He was done to a turn.

DUDLEY JONES was a man who devoted his best energy to the extinction of bores. With a clear-sightedness which few modern philanthropists possess, he recognised that, though Society had many enemies, none was so deadly as the bore. Burglars, indeed, JONES regarded with disapproval, and I have known him to be positively rude to a man who confessed in the course of conversation to being a forger. But his real foes were the bores, and all that one man could do to eliminate that noxious tribe, that did DUDLEY JONES do with all his might.

Of all his cases none seems to me so fraught with importance as the adventure of the Unwelcome Guest. It was, as JONES remarked at intervals of ten minutes, a black business. This guest—but I will begin at the beginning.

We were standing at the window of our sitting-room in Grocer Square on the morning of June 8, 189—, when a new brougham swept clean up to our door. We heard the bell ring, and foot-steps ascending the stairs.

There was a knock.

"Come in," said JONES; and our visitor entered.

"My name is Miss PETTIGREW," she observed, by way of breaking the ice.

"Please take a seat," said JONES in his smooth professional accents. "This is my friend WUDDUS. I generally allow him to remain during my consultations. You see, he makes himself useful in a lot of little ways, taking notes and so on. And then, if we

turned him out, he would only listen at the keyhole. You follow me, I trust? WUDDUS, go and lie down on the mat. Now, Miss PETTIGREW, if you please."

"Mine," began Miss PETTIGREW, "is a very painful case."

"They all are," said JONES.

"I was recommended to come to you by a Mrs. EDWARD NOODLE. She said that you had helped her husband in a great crisis."

"WUDDUS," said JONES, who to all appearances was half asleep, "fetch my scrapbook."

The press-cutting relating to Mr. EDWARD NOODLE was sandwiched between a statement that Mr. BALFOUR never eats doughnuts, and a short essay on the treatment of thrush in infants.

"Ah," said JONES, "I remember the case now. It was out of my usual line, being simply a case of theft. Mr. NOODLE was wrongfully accused of purloining a needle."

"I remember," I said eagerly. "The case for the prosecution was that NEDDY NOODLE nipped his neighbour's needle."

"WUDDUS," said JONES coldly, "be quiet. Yes, Miss PETTIGREW?"

"I will state my case as briefly as possible, Mr. JONES. Until two months ago my father and I lived alone, and were as happy as could possibly be. Then my uncle, Mr. STANLEY PETTIGREW, came to stay. Since that day we have not known what happiness is. He is driving us to distraction. He will talk so."

"Stories?"

"Yes. Chiefly tales of travel. Oh, Mr. JONES, it is terrible."

JONES's face grew cold and set.

"Then the man is a bore?" he said.

"A dreadful bore."

"I will look into this matter, Miss PETTIGREW. One last question. In the case of your father's demise—this is purely hypothetical—a considerable quantity of his property would, I suppose, go to Mr. STANLEY PETTIGREW?"

"More than half."

"Thank you. That, I think, is all this morning. Good-day, Miss PETTIGREW."

And our visitor, with a bright smile—at me, I always maintain, though JONES declares it was at him—left the room.

"Well, JONES," I said encouragingly, "what do you make of it?"

"I never form theories, as you are perfectly well aware," he replied curtly.

"Pass me my bagpipes."

I passed him his bagpipes and vanished.

It was late when I returned.

I found JONES lying on the floor with his head in a coal-scuttle.

"Well, WUDDUS," he said, "so you've come back?"

"My dear JONES, how——?"

"Tush, I saw you come in."

"Of course," I said. "How simple it seems when you explain it! But what about this business of Miss PETTIGREW's?"

"Just so. A black business, WUDDUS. One of the blackest I have ever handled. The man STANLEY PETTIGREW is making a very deliberate and systematic attempt to bore his unfortunate relative to death!"

I stared at him in silent horror.

Two days afterwards JONES told me that he had made all the arrangements. We were to go down to Pettigrew Court by the midnight mail. I asked, Why the midnight mail? Why not wait and go comfortably next day? JONES, with some scorn, replied that if he could not begin a case by springing into the midnight mail, he preferred not to undertake that case. I was silenced.

"I am to go down as a friend of the family," said he, "and you are going as a footman."

"Thanks," I said.

"Don't mention it," said JONES.

"You see, you have got to come in some capacity, for I must have a reporter on the spot, and as a bore is always at his worst at meal-times you will be more useful in the way of taking notes if you come as a footman. You follow me, WUDDUS?"

"But even now I don't quite see. How do you propose to treat the case?"

"I shall simply outbore this PETTIGREW. I shall cap all his stories with duller ones. Bring your note-book."

"Stay, JONES," I said. "It seems to me—correct me if I am wrong—that in the exhilaration of the moment you have allowed a small point to escape you."

"I beg your pardon, WUDDUS?" His face was pale with fury.

"A very small point," I said hurriedly.

"Simply this, in fact. If you begin outboring STANLEY, surely an incidental effect of your action will be to accelerate the destruction of your suffering host."

"True," said JONES thoughtfully.

"True. I had not thought of that. It is at such moments, WUDDUS, that a suspicion steals across my mind that you are not such a fool as you undoubtedly look." I bowed.

"I must make arrangements with Mr. PETTIGREW. Until I have finished with brother STANLEY he must keep to his room. Let him make some excuse. Perhaps you can suggest one?"

I suggested Asiatic cholera. JONES made a note of it.

On the following night, precisely at twelve o'clock, we sprang into the midnight mail.

(To be continued.)

MR. PUNCH'S SKETCHY INTERVIEWS.

XV.—MR. H. G. WELLS.

MR. WELLS'S residence, which is known as Spade House—Lord ROSEBERY having laid the foundation stone—stands on an eminence at Sandgate



"Mermaids, which are common objects of the local shore."

overlooking the English Channel. It was built on the prophets of *Anticipations*. Mr. WELLS chose this elevated site in order that he might keep an eye on France, especially on M. JULES VERNE; and also that he might be cognisant of the approach of mermaids, which are common objects of the local shore; so much so that the Sandgate Borough Council have had to pass a law regulating their movements. At the back of Mr. WELLS'S house is a hydraulic lift, built from his own designs and at his own expense, for the easy transport of these sea ladies from the beach to the Lees.

On our pressing the electric button the door was opened by a well-trained Martian, who in answer to our question hooted politely that Mr. WELLS was out on his Aeroplane, superintending the flying drill of the Sandgate Highlanders, and was for the time being an invisible man, but that he was expected in any moment.

While he was speaking a whirring noise was heard overhead, and Mr. WELLS swooped to earth. Divesting himself of his celluloid cloak, studded with plasmon buttons, Mr. WELLS, on demanding and receiving our assurance that we belonged to the middle classes, ushered us into his sanctum. We experienced considerable difficulty in keeping our feet, owing to the curvature of the floor—Mr. WELLS adopts this system to prevent the collection of dust—but finally succeeded in anchoring

ourselves to a selenite paperweight, while our host settled himself comfortably in the cushioned seats of his Time Machine and began to talk.

"No," said he, "I am not interested in the present, nor hardly in to-morrow. It is the day after the day after to-morrow on which my wistful gaze is fixed. Ah, England will be England then when Anticipations are realities, and man is no longer in the making but made. I look forward to a not too distant day when airships will be as common as hardships now are, and all incompetent statesmen and generals will have married mermaids and disappeared for ever into a subaqueous limbo."

"Is it true, Mr. WELLS," we asked, "that you are a convert to the tabloid dietary?"

"Certainly," replied the indomitable vaticinator. "The man of the future being *ex hypothesi* toothless, lozenges become a prime necessity. It is therefore the duty of all far-sighted citizens to forestall the inevitable and conform to the exigencies of posterity. I myself subsist exclusively on a peptonised angel cake prepared from a recipe supplied me by one of my wonderful visitors."

"When then do you expect to join the choir invisible?"

"When the wings which this diet is guaranteed to produce shall have fully grown. But in the interval I have much to do. You know that I am endeavouring to negotiate an Anglo-Martian alliance?"

We had heard a rumour to that effect.

"Mr. CHAMBERLAIN is favourable to the project, but Lord LANSLOWNE and Mr. BRODRICK are at present unconvinced."



"Mr. Wells was out on his aeroplane."

Then there is my National Nursery, in which I propose to subject the limbs of the young to a process which will enable future generations to adopt a rotary means of locomotion. If a Centaur why not an Androcycle?"



"I myself subsist exclusively on a peptonised angel cake."

"Why not?" we submissively echoed.

At this point we arose, unwilling any longer to deprive our great-grandchildren of the results of his labours. Mr. WELLS showed us to the door, and recommending his moving staircase as an easy means of descent left us with his blessing.

We stepped on it with a light heart, and some hours afterwards came to ourselves in the surgery of a Sandgate practitioner.

Moral.—Leave WELLS alone.

TO ANY SPRING POET.

(By Any Editor.)

If I were you I really think
I'd be more sparing with my ink,
(A lull in verse is surely due!)
So when you tremble on the brink
Of lyrics—and we tremble too!—
I wouldn't slip, if I were you.

Your vernal raptures tend to bore;
Of Spring I wish to hear no more;
To PHYLLIS kindly bid adieu,
Whom you (on paper) so adore;
I would—in mercy's name I sue,—
Live and let live, if I were you!

It is reported by the *Daily Chronicle* of the 24th inst. that "Some Conservatives at Bristol expressed regret that the Income Tax reduction was 4d. instead of 3d. as anticipated." Some people are so hard to please.

PASHLEY'S OPINIONS.

No. VI.

It was about three years after the little flare-up I told you about that I went and had another go at getting spliced. I hadn't done much in what they call Cupid's Court in the meantime. Of course I don't mean to say that I hadn't had lots of chances. A fellow who's making a bit of money and can show a good coat and a decent pair of trousers, and who's got a warm man for a father—well, you know what I mean, he's pretty sure to have a pack of girls after him all the time. But I wasn't taking any, that's the cold truth. For one thing I'd had such a facer over INEZ. It was no use blinking it: she had treated me scandalously. There was I pouring out all the young affections of my heart at her feet, and she, a married woman, with a great black-haired brute of a husband in Seville, was leading me on just as if she meant to say, "Pour away, pour away; it's pretty stuff, but it won't be wasted. You can pick it all up again directly, and mine with it; and someday we'll live in a flat and keep a footman." And all the time she knew it was all my eye, the heart and the flat and the footman and all the rest of it.

But that's a woman all over. Once she gets a good-looking chap in tow she can't bear to let him go—just keeps him on a string like a kitten, and pulls him in or lets him out as it suits her fancy. I did have a month or two of the mopes when it was all over, and tried to do a bit in poetry, but it didn't seem to come natural—the rhymes were stumblers for one thing, and the lines would go and get mixed up with one another, so I pretty soon chucked that.

Well, as I say, it was about three years afterwards that I got it again badly. This time it was in my own rank of life—one try at marriage beneath you is enough for any man, you can bet your life on that. Her name was EMILY COLLINS, and she was twenty-five, just about my own age. Her father and mother lived next door but one to us. He was something in the meat-market, I never knew rightly what, but it seemed to run to money, for he had a cook at £25 a year, and kept his own cellar of wine. Besides, they had their drawing-room done up in stamped leather wall-paper, and there were varnished bamboo ornaments and fans and china plates all over it, and two or three big books with gilt-edged leaves on the table in the middle. You could see they'd been well educated and had some refinement. EMILY was a very neat parcel of silks and laces. She wasn't as tall as some I've known, but she had a first-class figure—didn't run to ombompon or anything of that sort. She'd got a nice complexion too, with a couple of moles on her right cheek, and grey eyes. It was a funny thing, but she was the dead spit of her mother, barring wrinkles. In the dark you couldn't tell t'other from which. They both sang the same songs too. I thought them pretty good at the game in those days, but I suppose, being in love, I got blinded, and so I couldn't be a good judge of music; I've heard them since, and it didn't come to much.

I don't quite remember how it all began this time. I know I didn't fall in head-first with a splash, as I did with INEZ. I hadn't got the same feeling of swimming on soda-water bubbles when I saw her; but then of course this wasn't a first passion, and that always makes a difference. But I'd thought it over quietly with myself, and I felt that if we got hitched we could run the show very comfortably. Besides, they were good people, as I've said. Old BEN COLLINS's father had been on the town council somewhere in Gloucestershire, and Mrs. COLLINS's grandfather had made a pot of money in the corn trade. Anyhow it all appeared very suitable. EMILY seemed quite agreeable. I saw her pretty well every day, and paid her lots of compliments out of a

book of etiquette and courtship that I bought for a shilling. For instance, if she said it was a fine sunny day, I'd say, "Indeed? The truth is that the brightness of your eyes has made me insensible to the beams of the god of light." EMILY laughed and said, "Don't be so silly," but I could see she liked it. The only thing was I couldn't make up my mind how I'd propose to her. I'd thought out no end of plans—going on my knees, and writing her a letter, and coming at her through her father—but none of them seemed what I wanted, so at last I decided to leave it to chance. I thought if I caught her alone some evening I'd make a plunge and get it over.

Well, one day I found out that her mother had gone off visiting, and I felt pretty sure I should find EMILY at home. I went round to their house at six o'clock—it was December and pitch dark—and walked right up to the drawing-room without waiting for the servant to announce me, and went in. There was a lamp in the room, but it was flickering, and just as I got in it gave a bit of a flare and went down. However, I'd seen enough to know she was there all right, sitting on the sofa. "No," I said, as she made a move, "don't have it lit up. I like this sort of light. I want to say something to you." The fact was, it made me feel as bold as a lion to be in the dark. So I went on: said I'd loved her ever since I set eyes on her. Would she be mine? "The cold world," I said (I got it out of *Doomed to be Mated*) "may reprove our love, but what of that? We love; is not that enough?" and with that I seized her hand and covered it with kisses.

The next moment I got a smack on the side of the face that made me see stars, a voice that wasn't EMILY's hissed at me, "You serpent!" and the lamp, which hadn't really gone out, flared up again and showed me it was Mrs. COLLINS. She was standing like a hyena by the sofa. I was out of the house in two two's, you may be sure, and we haven't been on visiting terms since. I wrote and tried to explain things—said I'd had money losses and got unhinged, but it didn't seem to be any use. It was all over between EMILY and me. I couldn't have screwed myself up a second time. She married a farmer in Essex not long afterwards.

"IS THIS A DAGGER?"

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—In the Year Book of the Church of Scotland for 1903, at page 120, is a List of Moderators of General Assembly since 1560, to which is prefixed the following note:—"Moderators still living are marked with a dagger." I have a natural desire to know in what manner these distinguished and reverend gentlemen came by the dangerous wounds referred to.

There is also the further question—how many of the Moderators now slumbering peacefully beneath the green moss of some sequestered churchyard have been done to death by the coward hand of the assassin, and why was no inquiry held?

You, Sir, dwell south of the Tweed in comparatively civilised surroundings, but on this side there would appear to be room (and danger) enough to attract the missionary enterprise of any to whom China offers too peaceful a field of operations.

Yours most admirably,

DUGALD MACSPORRAN.

ANOTHER EUROPEAN CONCERT.—*Lloyd's Weekly News* publishes the following Reuter telegram:—"Berlin: Saturday.—The Emperor dined at the Embassy to-night. In addition to the whole staff of the Embassy the Trumpeter band of the 1st Dragoon Guards Regiment played during dinner." Surely the *chef* should have been excused.